

EDC

Education Sector Plan

Primary School Teacher Deployment Policy

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Teacher training or teacher recruitment alone cannot ensure the availability of a teacher at school. The teacher deployment is a larger issue in most of the developing countries and Malawi is having acute problem of teacher shortage in certain areas and in certain schools. This discussion papers addresses the teacher deployment issues.

Education Sector Plan Working Papers

TEACHER EDUCATION POLICY POSITION PAPERS

PAPER # 2

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Primary School Teacher Deployment

In a situation of short supply of teachers the deployment of available teachers on just and fair policy is urgently needed. It is evident that teachers posted to the schools in more remote zones do not stay there because of they cannot find suitable housing in those places. Further there is no special reason for them stay in a remote area when their fellow teachers with same salaries and qualifications are serving in better schools and in better environments. The **Figure 1** illustrates that there is one-to-one correspondence between the availability of housing and the availability of **Male teachers** in the six divisions. It seems that there factors other than housing that decides the staying of **female teacher** in post at in a given place.

Particularly when there is a shortage of teachers to deploy, it needs clear policy direction and strict implementation of the policy to ensure the millions of rural children coming to school are provided with minimum basic education that the government is committed to provide. The Managers have to realize that the poor despite of their poor economic situation bears the private cost of sending children to school and moreover they bear the opportunity cost of sending the child to school otherwise these children work and help their poor parents. Therefore if the school fails to offer what it is meant to offer there is double loss of income to a poor parent – cost for sending to school and the lost opportunity cost. The failure of providing education, the minimum of having a teacher in school to teach is a responsibility of the management. Today education is a human right. Any democratic government favoring one sector of the population by providing teachers to the children of the urban by neglecting the poorer section of the rural society amounts to discrimination. The public system of education is to bring social justice to those who are at the recipient end of the delivery of public education.

Examining the Teacher Pupil Ratios at Division, District, Zone and samples of selected Zones in both urban and rural settings, it seems that one cannot simply apply one strait criterion for the deployment of teachers. Certainly there are too many teachers in the urban schools and not necessarily too little in the rural schools. It is important to have a policy which enables a school to function efficiently and effectively whether it is rural or urban areas. To illustrate this we can examine a few schools from Rumphi Zone of Rumphi District, Northern Division.

Rural School 1: The Kasenga FP School , having 325 students and 9 teachers with a Teacher Pupil ratio of 1:36; Pupil Classroom ratio of 1:32 and having reasonable number of students surviving in the higher standards could loose three teachers if 1:60 criterion is applied. Having 10 classrooms and students in all 8 standards for effective functioning, the school may require 8 teachers. Although it is a rural school it has a minimum one extra teacher.

Rural School 2: Even some of the rural school may look like that it has too many teachers, for an example Kanyawu FP School in Rumphi District of Northern division has 103 students, with students in Std 1 - 6 and no students in Std 7 and 8, has 3 teachers. The T/P ratio is 1: 34 and Pupil Rural Classroom Ratio is 1: 17. At 1:60 ratio school could be given only 2 teachers to run six classes.

Rural School 3: Mphompha School in Rumphi district has 484 students, reasonable numbers in all 8 standards and teacher pupil ratio is 1: 44 and classroom ratio is 1:44 having 11 teachers. This is an ideal school to apply 1:60 criterion, and post 8 teacher and can transfer three teachers.

Let's examine some urban schools of Nidirande Zone in the Blantyre City of the Southern Western division.

School 1: Blantyre Girls School has 1043 students, 27 teachers, 19 classrooms with a T/P ratio of 1:27 and P/C Ratio of 1:54. When enrollment is assessed in each standard and the number of classrooms this school can function efficiently with 19 teachers and a Headteacher: i.e. 20. Obviously the school has seven teachers extra who can be deployed to schools with shortage of teachers.

School 2: Chitsimi School has 4,540 students, 68 teachers and 16 classrooms runs in two shifts. If 1:60 rule is applied the school gets 76 teachers. Here is a situation the school is under-staffed. On the other hand more staff is of no use as there are only 16 classrooms and double shifts can have 32 classes and ideally needs only 32 teachers plus 4 – 6 additional teachers for administration. The school has a classroom ratio of 1:283. Here the issue is not only a teacher deployment issue but rationalization of the school may be an additional school.

School 3: Lilongwe Boys school in Kasungu District has 443 boys, 11 classrooms and 29 teachers. Maximum this school may need is 8 teachers. Why 29?

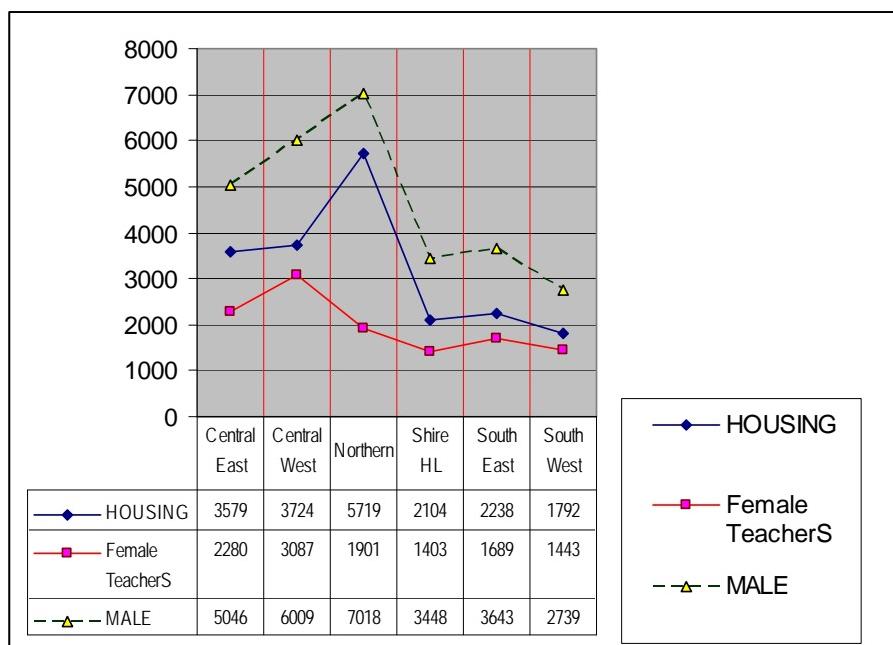
This shows that issue of teacher deployment urgently needs a policy. It is not possible to have a single 1:60 criterion for teacher deployment. Malawi needs to have multiple criteria that allow a school to function effectively and efficiently. The number of students enrolled, number of functioning standards with student numbers; availability of female teachers; etc. Almost all schools have very high enrollment in Standards 1- 3 and then the

numbers decline. Almost all schools have over 50% overage students in every class. The deployment policy should be formulated considering all these variables.

It is important to find out the factors that makes the deployment of teachers to more rural areas difficult. Therefore, it is necessary to undertake a few *action research studies* of a selected few schools in the remote rural areas to identify the real factors.

FIGURE 1

CORRELATION BETWEEN AVAILABILITY OF HOUSING AND AVAILABILITY OF TEACHERS



However, housing and incentives are much needed to post teacher to the real remote areas and policy should favor these.

The PEA should be given a set of criteria with guidelines and limits to examine school by school and recommend the number and the composition of the teaching staff of a school.

The 2004 EMIS data shows that in the first six months of the current school year 15% of the teachers have changed the school that they serve. This coupled with 06% annual attrition rate indicates that 1/ 5th of the teachers leave the school during the school year. This is an alarmingly high rate that needs policy guidelines.

The situation in Malawi shows either lack of policy on teacher deployment or the negligence of implementation of the policy, if there is one.

The discussions in the sector plan preparation technical meetings were highlighting the *lack of housing* as the first rank factor for this situation. Obviously dwelling also requires at minimum supply of water and sanitation.

The discussion also pointed at the *lack of incentives* for the rural teachers. A teacher serving in a rural school will use that system to leave to a better school as soon as she or he is posted to that school unless there is some special reason that attracts the person to serve there. The Sector Plan mentions the need to have incentives for the teachers. The following no-cost Incentives are proposed and it is necessarily include these in the policy of teacher deployment and also accommodate in the criteria of selection for promotions.

Policy Directions

Teacher Deployment Related Considerations:

a. Housing: Lack of housing for teachers indicates that there are no houses in that area for a teacher to take on rent. It does not imply only that there is no school based teacher's housing. It is more serious than that. Housing has a commercial value. There is assured rent seeking potential demand when a teacher seeks housing on rent. Therefore for both public and private sector a cost recovery is clearly present. Urban housing is more attractive to the profit oriented to the private sector than rural housing. Therefore:

- I. Policy should be formed leaving the investment in teacher's housing in urban, sub –urban, peri-urban to the private sector, and for the public sector to concentrate only on the rural housing in the next ten year period.
- II. The current practice of building schools and teacher's quarters as one investment should be discontinued and teacher's housing should be treated as a separate line of investment.
- III. Policy statement should clearly indicate all government and donor investment in teacher's housing should be directed only to the remote rural zones where there is a severe shortage of housing for teachers.

IV. Policy should direct at Low-Cost-Housing with community support. Donor grants are given communities through an identified dependable mechanism under the proposed NCPIPBM.

b. Incentives:

- Government to give priority position to teachers served over 5 years in rural areas at promotions;
- Introduce rural school experience as an essential criteria of eligibility for promotions;
- Government may also consider granting of an additional salary step to teachers who have served over 5 years in designated remote areas.
- The education sector plan has accommodated an allowance of MK100/ per month to 20,000 teachers per annum for those teachers serving in the most remote schools. If this is accepted MOE should identify the schools where the teachers would qualify to receive this additional allowance.

c. Alternative Teacher Deployment Policy Considerations:

- i. Examining the Teacher Pupil Ratios at Division, District, Zone and samples of selected Zones in both Urban and rural settings.
- ii. ***Direct Recruitment to Zonal Level:*** Posting teachers to rural areas can also be overcome by direct recruitment to Zones than to the Districts. The Ministry will advertise the recruitment of teachers on Zone-wise with attached additional benefits to the teachers willing to serve in those most deprived areas. The teacher recruited to the specified Zones could be released to another Zone after completion of the stated minimum period of X number of years. This allows the MOE to target its financial incentives to the most need areas and minimize the financial implications of providing incremental incentives.
- iii. **Rural Experience:** Introduce a minimum of three years of service in rural school is essential criteria for eligibility and selection for promotions. Selection criteria is developed and higher amount of point allocated to the teachers who have served over five years in rural schools in identified and enlisted schools/Schools Zones.
- iv. **Allocation of Teachers Based on Student Numbers:** Deployment of teachers to a school should strictly follow the 1:60 Teacher: Pupil ratio. Headteacher, PEA and DEM will be directly held responsible for the violation of the rule. In case of additional teachers are posted the Headteacher should not allocate work and report to the DEM with a copy to HR/MOE.

- v. **Maintain Teacher and Student Daily Attendance Registers:** Student and Teacher Attendance Registered to be provided by the MOE and issue a directive placing legal value to the registers and provide guidelines and rules on the regular daily maintenance of the registers. School inspection and supervision to place examine registers and check monthly averages.
- vi. **NCPIPSM and Monitoring :** Under the National Community Participation in Primary School Management all teachers should enter in to social contracts with SMC's to attend school and assigned classes regularly and SMC to provide teacher and pupil attendance reports to PEA's on regular basis.
- vii. **Water and Sanitation:** NCPIPSM and Government on priority basis to provide the basic facilities such as teacher housing, water and sanitation to schools to satisfy minimum requirements for a teacher to serve in rural schools.
- viii. **Retirement at the End of the School Year:** Also a policy directive is needed to stop transferring teachers during the school year. Also if a teacher's official retirement date falls on a given day during the school term/school year that teacher should be given the option to retire at the end of the school year. This will not disrupt the teaching and student learning during the school year.